

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
WILDLIFE PROGRAM**

March 13, 2013

TO: Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission
FROM: Donny Martorello, Carnivore Section Manager
SUBJECT: Wolf Conservation and Management Activities Update

The following is a compilation of wolf management activities from the Wildlife and Enforcement Program reports (both Regions and Headquarters) from the period of February 24-March 11, 2013.

Headquarters

Depredation incident: The Department received a report of a wolf attack on a dog on March 10, 2013 (See below: Region 2 March 10 for additional information). The incident was investigated by Biologist Heinlen and Officers Day and McCormick within a few hours of receiving the report.

The investigating team briefed Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Conflict **Specialist** Jay Shepherd, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) District Supervisor Gregg Kurz, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services District Supervisor Chad Heuser, WDFW Carnivore Section Manager Donny Martorello, and WDFW Wildlife Conflict Section Manager Stephanie Simek on March 11, 2013. The investigating team closed the investigation on Monday, March 11, 2013, with a determination of confirmed wolf depredation (injury).

Public meetings: Game Division Manager Dave Ware, Carnivore Section Manager Martorello, Wildlife Conflict Section Manager Simek along with Region 1 and Region 2 staff conducted three wolf-livestock conflict management meetings in Cusick, Colville and Okanogan. The meetings provided an opportunity for the Department to discuss current status of wolves in Washington and what actions the Department is taking to assist livestock operators to minimize conflict with wolves.

Additionally, all attendees were given an opportunity to ask questions, express their concerns, and provide their thoughts regarding wolf-livestock conflict management. All three meetings were well attended by the public; Cusick had approximately 67, Colville approximately 250, and Okanogan had approximately 160 attendees.

Region 1

February 24-March 2, 2013

Wolf Captures: Conflict Specialist Shepherd assisted Wolf Biologist Becker with the aerial wolf collaring effort in the fixed wing spotter plane. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed Smackout wolf sightings with Rancher Jeff Dawson. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed wolf sightings with U.S. Air Force Survival School employee Todd Foster who along with private citizens has recently observed wolves in the Chain Lakes and Ruby Mountain areas. Shepherd produced and delivered electronic maps of a recently dispersed Smackout Pack wolf to Region 2 Biologists Jeff Heinlen and Scott Fitkin.



Eight wolves crossing a lake in the Diamond wolf pack territory (above). Helicopter utilized for a darting effort in the patchy cover of the Diamond wolf pack territory (below).



Northeast Washington Wolf Meetings: Biologist McCanna and Specialist Shepherd assisted Game Division Manager Dave Ware, Carnivore Manager Donny Martorello, and Conflict Manager Stephanie Simek with the Cusick and Colville wolf-livestock conflict management meetings. The Cusick meeting was well attended with 67 people and the Colville meeting had approximately 250 people in attendance. Both meetings went well providing the public opportunities to ask questions after the presentations and visit with staff after the meetings to address localized concerns. Jay Shepherd is already receiving follow-up contacts from these meetings.



Conflict Manager Stephanie Simek, Carnivore Manager Donny Martorello, Game Division Manager Dave Ware, and Regional Director Steve Pozzanghera at the Colville wolf-livestock conflict management public meeting addressed approximately 250 people.

Landowner Database: Supervisor McCanna met with Jay Shepherd on Thursday to develop a plan to address landowners in each wolf territory within District 1. Specialist Shepherd will start a landowner database for each territory with Smackout being the priority. Shepherd will also be developing databases for elk and deer damage for each county.

March 3-9, 2013

Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed Smackout wolf issues with a Spirit Junction rancher. Shepherd also discussed pro-active non-lethal methods with a rancher in the Huckleberry wolf pack territory and scheduled a visit to his property. Conflict Specialist Shepherd also discussed wolf issues and Smackout wolf territory access with the U.S. Air Force Survival School. Shepherd delivered a report with a map of last field seasons remote camera and wolf detection effort to Wolf Biologist Scott Becker. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed a weekend snowmobile trip into the Ruby Creek area with Officer Erickson as three wolves were observed above the Pend Oreille River near several ranches and calving operations. The trip was not confirmed at the time of this report.

Conflict Specialist Shepherd resupplied a depredation investigation kit, purchased electric fence equipment, and organized the wolf-livestock response equipment trailer. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed wolf issues and possible duties with Technician Bendixen who will be assisting with wolf issues this year.

Region 1 Wildlife Program Staff (Base, Shepherd, McCanna, and Robinette) participated in a staff meeting led by Carnivore Section Manager Donny Martorello and attended by other agency staff at the Regional Office in Spokane Valley. This meeting was “Part 3” of the wolf management debrief from last year’s field season activities. General agenda items covered included roles, responsibilities, communication, livestock depredation response protocols, and planning/preparing for the 2013 field season. Covered in greater detail were situations necessitating lethal removal of wolves, methodology to employ, and processes/procedures to follow.

Region 2

March 2: Biologist Heinlen investigated a cluster of locations from WA-17M radio collar on the WDFW Similkameen-Chopaka Unit. Two cattle carcasses were found dumped at the location with evidence of scavenging. The livestock owner was contacted who promptly buried both carcasses removing the attractant from the area.

March 10: Biologist Heinlen assisted WDFW Enforcement Officers McCormick and Day investigate a reported wolf attack on a domestic dog near Twisp. The reporting party advised that at about 1:30 a.m. his husky/wolf hybrid male dog inside the residence started barking and jumping at the glass door. The reporting party ran out to see his female husky/wolf hybrid dog pinned down by what appeared to be a wolf. The male hybrid then chased the offending animal off into the night returning in the morning. The offending animal was described as being much larger than the 100 pound male hybrid. A search of the area located a single set of larger canine tracks measuring 4.5 inches between the widest points. Both domestic dogs had smaller tracks. The area is within the Lookout pack’s range. The female hybrid will require medical treatment, but the injuries did not appear life threatening.